Category-wise details of VRS optees and their dues paid are not Centrally maintained.

(c) CRR scheme is under implementation by Department of Public Enterprises since 2001 -02. Since then and upto December, 2005, number of VRS optees trained under this scheme is 82267.

(d) During 2003-04, out of total number of 12134 trained under this scheme, 5732 have been redeployed. During 2004-05, out of 28003 trained under this scheme, 9346 have been redeployed.

(e) and (f) CRR Scheme is being implemented by various nodal agencies through Employees Assistance Centres (EAC) selected by the Government. Allocation of funds under the scheme has been enhanced from Rs. 8 Crore in 2001-02 to Rs. 30 Crore in 2004-05. Correspondingly, the numbers of VRS optees availing benefit under this scheme has also increased from 8064 employees covered in 2001-02 to 28,003 during 2004-05. Many of VRS optees are either settled or with passage of time, have moved to other places for alternative employment. Therefore, some gap between VRS optees and their coverage under CRR Scheme and their redeployment remains.

In order to make the scheme more effective, nodal agencies have been advised to associate financial institutions and other agencies in the scheme and strengthen post-training follow-up activities to ensure higher re-deployment. With the enhancement of plan allocation under this scheme, the number of nodal agencies has also gone up from 17 in 2001-02 to 42 in the year 2005-06 which has helped to increase the coverage under the scheme.

Supply of gas from Myanmar

253. SHRI MOTILAL VORA:
SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Myanmar has refused to supply natural gas to India and instead preferred doing business with China;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Joint Secretary level officer in the Ministry had cut short his trip and return back after Myanmarese authorities said they had tied-up gas sales with China;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether India has been pursuing gas imports from Iran and Turkmenistan *via* transnational gas pipelines to meet the growing energy needs as domestic production barely meets half of its requirement;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) the progress achieved in this direction so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL); (a) to (d) No, Sir. Myanmar has not refused to supply natural gas to India. An Indian delegation led by Joint Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas visited Myanmar on 9th January, 2006 and had discussions with the Myanmar side for import of Myanmar gas to India. During the discussions, the Myanmar side suggested that the Indian side might wait till May, 2006 for the third party certification of their gas reserves before moving forward on the discussions.

The Myanmar side also informed that a Chinese delegation had visited Myanmar in November, 2005 stating their interests to purchase Myanmar gas and to install a gas pipeline to carry the gas to China, following this, an MoU was signed between the two sides to that effect.

The Indian side have conveyed to the Myanmar side that, pending certification of the gas reserves, the two sides need to discuss and finalize as many commercial and contractual terms as possible under the Heads of Agreement (HoA) for sale-purchase of Myanmar gas, and have accordingly requested the Myanmar side to forward a draft HoA for the same. The discussions with the Myanmar side for import of their gas are continuing.

(e) to (g) India has been pursuing the import of natural gas from Iran through the Iran-Pakistan-India transnational gas pipeline. For this purpose, two sets of separate Secretary-level bilateral Joint Working Groups (JWGs) have been set up with Pakistan and Iran. So far, three meetings each of these JWGs have been held, in which various technical, commercial, financial, legal and other project related issues have been discussed. The discussions are continuing.

As regards gas imports from Turkmenistan, an Indian delegation recently participated in the Ninth Steering Committee meeting of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan gas pipeline project held in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, on 14-15 February, 2006, as an observer. The Steering Committee has invited India to become an official member of the project. India has now to take a view on joining the project.

Rangarajan Committee Report

† 254. SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:
DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received the report of Rangarajan Committee;

(b) if so, when this report was received; and

(c) the recommendations made in this report regarding the tax rates on petroleum-products and for determining the prices of petroleum products?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. the Rangarajan Committee report on pricing and taxation of petroleum products was submitted to the Government on 17.2.2006.

(c) The main recommendations of the Committee are as follows:—

1. On pricing of petrol and diesel:

(i) Shift to a trade parity pricing formula for determining refinery gate as well as retail prices;

(ii) Government to keep at arms length from price determination and to allow flexibility to oil companies to fix the retail price under the proposed formula; and (iii) Reduce effective protection by lowering the customs duty on petrol and diesel to 7.5%.

2. On pricing of domestic LPG and PDS kerosene:

(i) Restrict subsidized kerosene to BPL families only; (ii) Raise the price of domestic LPG by Rs. 75/cylinder; (iii) Discontinue the practice of asking upstream companies to provide upstream

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.